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NEWS RELEASE

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NEWS RELEASE

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**Highway Safety and Law Enforcement Officials Renew Plea
Caution by Pedestrians and Motorists**

Dover – After the second fatal pedestrian crash in a week, Office of Highway Safety (OHS) and Delaware State Police officials are renewing their pleas for caution by pedestrians and motorists on Delaware roadways. The death of the pedestrian struck Wednesday evening on Rt. 141 in New Castle County brings the total number of pedestrians killed since January 1st of this year to 13, compared to nine pedestrians who had been killed by this time last year, a 30% increase.

Less than a week ago on Saturday August 2nd, a pedestrian was stuck and killed on Route 4 in New Castle County and Delaware State Police officials say they have seen an alarming trend in overall pedestrian crashes over the last few weeks. The primary factors cited in these crashes have been pedestrians crossing the roadway outside of designated crosswalks or intersections, walking in the roadway, or walking under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.

A review of crash data shows that pedestrian crashes tend to spike in August which is why OHS launched its Walk Smart Campaign last week. Through a combination of enforcement and awareness, the Walk Smart Campaign is designed to prevent fatal and injury crashes involving pedestrians by educating the public about safe crossing practices.

Five state and local police agencies with identified high pedestrian crash areas in their jurisdictions have been provided with additional funding to conduct enforcement of pedestrian traffic safety laws. Most violations involve a base fine of \$25.00 but additional court costs can result in a total fine of up to \$70.00. Officers will also be provided with blinking lights and brochures to distribute to the public.

Education and awareness efforts are key to the success of the Walk Smart campaign. Billboards asking motorists to “Give Pedestrians a Brake” are being placed in New Castle and

Sussex Counties along high crash corridors such as Routes 40, 13 and 113. Signage can be seen on city and county DART busses ask pedestrians to make sure they are visible to motorists. In addition, OHS will be distributing posters with safe walking tips to businesses and reflective blinking lights to those who walk and jog in low light conditions to the public.

Everyone is a pedestrian at some point and time so the public at large is being asked to review and follow these safety tips:

- Always cross at marked intersections or crosswalks when possible.
- If no sidewalk is available, walk facing traffic and walk as far from the edge of the roadway as possible.
- Wear reflective clothing or carry a flashlight when walking at night or in low light conditions – it's the law.
- Avoid walking along or attempting to cross a roadway if you have alcohol and/or other drugs in your system. Impaired walking, like impaired driving, can be deadly and is illegal.
- If your vehicle breaks down on an interstate or busy roadway, don't leave your vehicle. Instead call #77 or 911 for assistance. Motorists can also call #77 to report a disabled vehicle they see on the roadways.
- Teach children not to run into the street after balls, don't allow them to cross alone until you've practiced the basics with them hundreds of times.
- If you are driving, be on the lookout for pedestrians near the roadway.

For more information on the Walk Smart campaign visit the Office of Highway Safety website at www.ohs.delaware.gov and click on the Walk Smart campaign button.

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